



EXHIBIT 4 HUH
DATE 2-13-09
HB 292

Representative Arlene Becker, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Montana House of Representatives
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Dear Chairperson Becker:

The Association of Montana Public Health Officials supports passage of HB 292 because this bill expressly permits expedited partner therapy (EPT) for people diagnosed with the sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as chlamydia or gonorrhea. Expedited partner therapy (EPT) is an innovative treatment option. EPT has been proved to increase treatment rates and decrease the number of people who are reinfected. With EPT:

- Patients deliver either medications or prescriptions to their sexual partners.
- The doctor does not examine the partner.

In 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended using EPT as an option for treating patients diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea. There are several different traditional ways to get a patient's sexual partners treated, including:

- A doctor contacting a patient's sexual partner(s);
- A patient encouraging his/her partner(s) to visit a doctor; or
- A patient providing the name(s) of his/her partner(s) to public health officials to contact. Public health workers notify partners and advise them to get a medical examination, a lab test, and a prescription for medication if needed.

Traditional STD control presents several challenges for public health. Some cases and/or partners do not have a medical home. It often takes two or more weeks to establish care as a new patient. Affordability of medical care is a second challenge. An office visit, lab charges for STD testing, and prescription costs prevent some cases/partners from getting care and treatment at all. A person who can't get into medical care, or can't make payment may spread the infection to others. Most cases occur in those between the ages of 15-24, which is a group likely to experience barriers to timely medical care.

Given funding constraints in public health agencies, there are too many cases for current methods to be effective. Last year, there were more than 3,200 cases of sexually transmitted infection in Montana. In 2006 there were 2,841.

House Bill 292 is an important tool to control health care cost and reduce morbidity from sexually transmitted disease. AMPHO strongly supports its passage.

Sincerely,


Mike Henderson, R.N.

Public Health Nurse, Lewis and Clark County